

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING BY EXPRESS MAIL

"EXPRESS MAIL" Mailing Label No.
EL 524 961 721 US
Date of Deposit October 31, 2000 .
I hereby certify that this paper or fee
is being deposited with the U.S. Postal
Service "Express Mail Post Office to
Addressee" service under 37 CFR 1.10 on
the date indicated above and is
addressed to the Assistant Commissioner
for Patents, Box Patent Application,
Washington, D.C. 20231

Type or Print Name Carolyn Bova

Carolyn Bova
Signature

PRINTER PEN

REFERENCE TO EARLIER FILED PROVISIONAL APPLICATIONS

This patent application claims the benefit of
priority from, and incorporates by reference the entire
disclosure of, co-pending U.S. Provisional Patent
Application Serial Nos. 60/182,742, filed on February 16,
2000, 60/190,343, filed on March 16, 2000, and 60/192,662,
filed on March 28, 2000.

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

The present application for patent is related to and
hereby incorporates by reference the subject matter
disclosed in U.S. Patent Application Serial Nos.

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09/703, 497 (Attorney Docket No.34650-566PT),
entitled "Specially Formatted Paper Based Applications of
a Mobile Phone"; 09/703, 503 (Attorney Docket
No.34650-569PT), entitled "Method and System for Using an
5 Electronic Reading Device as a General Application Input
and Navigation Interface"; 09/703, 704 (Attorney
Docket No.34650-578PT), entitled "Predefined Electronic
Pen Applications in Specially Formatted Paper";
09/703, 506 (Attorney Docket No. 34650-579PT),
10 entitled "A System and Method for Operating an Electronic
Reading Device User Interface"; 09/703, 325
(Attorney Docket No. 34650-601PT), entitled "Method and
System for Using an Electronic Reading Device on Non-paper
Devices"; 09/703, 486 (Attorney Docket No. 34650-
15 602PT), entitled "Multi-layer Reading Device";
09/703, 351 (Attorney Docket No. 34650-604PT),
entitled, "Method and System for Configuring and Unlocking
an Electronic Reading Device"; 09/703, 482 (Attorney
Docket No. 34650-607PT), entitled "Method and System for
20 Electronically Recording Transactions and Performing
Security Function"; 09/703, 494 (Attorney Docket No.
34650-608PT), entitled "Electronic Pen with Ink On/ink off
Function and Paper Touch Sensing"; 09/703, 480

(Attorney Docket No. 34650-654PT), entitled "Method and System for Handling FIFO and Position Data in Connection with an Electronic Reading Device"; 09/703, 479

(Attorney Docket No. 34650-655PT), entitled "Hyperlink

5 Applications for an Electronic Reading Device";

09/703, 464 (Attorney Docket No. 34650-656PT),

entitled "Measuring Applications for an Electronic Reading

Device"; 09/703, 321 (Attorney Docket No. 34650-

657PT), entitled "Method and System for Controlling an

10 Electronic Utility Device Using an Electronic Reading

Device"; and 09/703, 421 (Attorney Docket No. 34650-

658PT), entitled "Positioning Applications for an

Electronic Reading Device"; and 09/703, 326

(Attorney Docket No. 34650-673PT), entitled "Method for

15 Sharing Information Between Electronic Reading Devices";

and in U.S. Provisional Patent Application Serial Nos.

60/244, 775 (Attorney Docket No. 34650-671PL),

entitled "Electronic Pen for E-Commerce Implementations";

and 60/244, 803 (Attorney Docket No. 34650-672PL),

20 entitled "Electronic Pen Help Feedback and Information

Retrieval"; all filed concurrently herewith.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Technical Field of the Invention

The present invention relates in general to the communications field, and in particular to an interaction
5 of an electronic reading device with an address pattern.

Description of Related Art

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Docket# 34650-606PT
Numerous devices exist for accepting user input and
controlling user interaction with desktop and portable
computers, personal digital assistance (PDAs), mobile
10 phones, and other types of electronic devices. For
example, a keyboard can be used to accept typed input and
other types of commands, a mouse or a track-ball can be
used to provide relative motion input as well as various
types of point-and-click selections, a keypad can be used
15 to provide input of numerical data and functional
commands, navigational keys can be used for scrolling
lists or otherwise repositioning a cursor, and various
types of touchpads or touchscreens can be used to provide
absolute positional coordinate inputs. Each type of
20 mechanism for accepting input and for supporting user
interaction has benefits and disadvantages in terms of
size, convenience, flexibility, responsiveness, and easy

of use. Generally, the selection of a particular type of input mechanism is dependent upon the function of the application and the degree and type of interaction required.

5 With the ever expanding capabilities and availability of applications both on the Internet and the area of wireless technology, there continues to be a need to develop and provide new mechanisms for accepting input and interacting with users. In particular, some of the
10 existing technologies suffer from drawbacks or limitations, such as size and flexibility, that make them impractical and/or inconvenient to use in some situations. By expanding the range of mechanisms for supporting user interaction, application developers and end-users can have
15 greater flexibility in the selection of input devices. Preferably, any such new mechanisms will provide increased flexibility and will maximize user convenience. In addition, the development of new mechanisms for
20 interacting with users can expand the realm of potential applications.

For example, while a keyboard typically provides a great deal of flexibility, particularly when it is used in connection with a mouse, a touchscreen, or other

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navigational device, its size makes it inconvenient in many cases, especially in the wireless context.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

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The present invention comprises a method and system
5 for generating output based on the position of an
electronic pen on a specially formatted paper. In
particular, the electronic pen determines positions on the
specially formatted paper by periodically detecting (e.g.,
numerous times per second) a predefined address pattern of
10 the specially formatted paper. Depending on each detected
position of the electronic pen, the electronic pen
generates an output that corresponds to the detected
position.

In one embodiment of the invention, the electronic
15 pen includes a printer for printing graphical or textual
images that are stored in a memory of the electronic pen
or a server or other electronic device with which the
electronic pen is in communication. Such printing is
performed, for instance, using a thermo-print head in
20 connection with a thermal sensitive specially formatted
paper. Alternatively or in addition, the electronic pen
can generate an audio output (e.g., using a built-in

speaker) based on the detected position of the electronic pen. Preferably, the output function is sufficiently accurate to permit the electronic pen to generate substantially the same output, regardless of the direction in which the electronic pen is moved across the paper, the number of times the electronic pen is moved across the same location, and the angle between the electronic pen and the paper.

In another aspect of the invention, information that is written or drawn on a specially formatted paper or surface using a writing mode of an electronic pen can be stored and regenerated by a printing mode of the same or a different electronic pen. In addition, the stored written or drawn images can be selectively resized prior to printing.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

For a more complete understanding of the present invention, reference is made to the following detailed description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings wherein:

FIGURE 1 is a block diagram of a system in which an electronic pen can be used as an input device;

FIGURE 2 is a schematic diagram of a system for supporting use of the electronic pen described in connection with FIGURE 1;

FIGURE 3 is an illustration of the protocol stacks
5 that can be used in the case of local communications between an electronic pen and an electronic pen client;

FIGURE 4 is an illustration of protocol stacks that can be used when an electronic pen and an electronic pen client communicate with one another via an Internet
10 connection;

FIGURE 5 is an illustration of a protocol stack for communications between an electronic pen client and each of the supporting entities when the electronic pen client is not located within a server on the Internet;

FIGURE 6 is an illustration of protocol stacks that
15 are used for communications between an electronic pen client and each of the supporting entities when the electronic pen client is located on the Internet;

FIGURE 7 is a block diagram of the electronic pen
20 logic that handles positions, strokes, actions, and grid descriptions;

FIGURE 8 is a block diagram of a state machine for the electronic pen control block shown in FIGURE 7;

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FIGURE 9 is a block diagram of a state machine for an electronic pen client;

FIGURES 10A-10C are a message flow and signaling diagram illustrating the operation of the electronic pen system shown and discussed in connection with FIGURE 2;

FIGURE 11 is an illustration of an example of an electronic printer pen in accordance with the present invention; and

FIGURE 12 is a more detailed illustration of an electronic printer pen that is capable of both printing output information using a thermo-print head and creating handwritten information using an ink cartridge.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a system in which an electronic reading device, such as an electronic pen, an electronic mouse, or a hand scanner, works in cooperation with an address pattern (e.g., a specially formatted paper) to provide for a detection of a location of the electronic reading device over the address pattern. For instance, a pattern of dots can be defined such that, by examining a very small portion of the pattern, a precise location in the overall pattern can be determined. In

fact, it is possible to define a pattern that has the size of 73,000,000,000,000 A4 pages, which is equivalent to half the size of the entire United States. Portions of the pattern can be placed on sheets of paper or other objects.

5 Then, using an electronic scanner pen that can detect the dots in the pattern, it is possible to detect the location of the pen with respect to the unique pattern. For example, when such a pen is used in connection with a specially formatted paper, the pen can detect its position
10 (e.g., using a built in camera) by detecting a 3 mm by 3 mm portion of the pattern. By taking approximately 100 pictures per second, the pen is capable of determining its exact position to within 0.1 mm or less. This system can be used to provide user input, to facilitate user
15 interaction, or to store handwritten notes or drawings. Moreover, by associating portions of the overall pattern with certain applications, such a system can be used to interact with wide variety of applications.

20 Referring now to FIGURE 1, there is illustrated an example of a system 2 in which an electronic pen can be used as an input device. The electronic pen includes an ink cartridge and is capable of writing in a typical

fashion. The electronic pen 10, however, includes some type of sensor (e.g., a built-in camera) that is used for detecting an address pattern on a specially formatted piece of paper 12. In particular, the paper 12 is
5 formatted with a small portion of a large address pattern such that when the electronic pen 10 is used to write on or otherwise make marks on the paper 12, the writings or markings can be electronically detected and stored.

As an example, the paper 12 might constitute a form
10 that can be used for sending an e-mail. Thus, the paper 12 might include a space for writing in the e-mail address of an intended recipient, a space for writing a subject of the e-mail, and a space for writing the body of the e-mail. As the electronic pen 10 is used to fill in each of
15 the spaces, the position and movement of the electronic pen 10 on the paper 12 can be determined by repeatedly detecting the current x, y coordinates of the pen 10 (e.g., at rate of 100 frames per second). The markings can then be converted into ASCII text using an appropriate
20 handwriting recognition program. Once the user completes the form, the e-mail can be sent, for example, by checking a send box at a predetermined location on the paper 12.

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Preferably, the coordinate information collected by the pen 10 is sent by a short range radio transmitter in the electronic pen 10 to a nearby mobile station 14 using a short range radio interface 16 such as a local wireless radio link (e.g., a local wireless radio link supported by Ericsson's Bluetooth™ wireless communications technology). Alternatively, instead of using a mobile station 14, the coordinate information could also be sent to, for instance, a desktop or portable computer, a personal digital assistant (PDA), a television, or a Bluetooth terminal. Moreover, instead of using a local wireless radio link, other types of local wireless links, such as inductive coupling and infrared light; other types of radio links, such as Global System for Mobile Communication (GSM); or wired transmission media, such as a cable can also be used. The information can then be forwarded via an appropriate link, such as a cellular air interface 18, to a base station 20 or other network node.

Referring now to FIGURE 2, there is illustrated a schematic diagram of a system 2 for supporting use of the electronic pen 10 described in connection with FIGURE 1. Throughout the subsequent discussion, the system 2 is described primarily in connection with an electronic pen

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10. It will be understood, however, that the invention and the underlying system 2 can instead use any type of electronic reading device, such as an electronic pen, an electronic mouse, or a hand scanner. As shown in FIGURE 2, the system 2 includes six different entities, including the electronic pen 10, electronic pen client 22, a control node 24, a name server 26, a base translator 28, and an application server 30. Although these various devices are described and depicted separately, it is also possible to combine two or more of the entities into the same device (e.g., the electronic pen 10 and electronic pen client 22 can be contained in the same device).

The electronic pen 10 is responsible for detecting positions on the address pattern, producing actions, and sending information to the electronic pen client 22. In addition to being able to leave pen markings, some electronic pens can also have the ability to produce other types of output, such as sound, vibration, or flashing lights. The electronic pen 10 includes a memory for storing a current grid, which comprises information relating to an area of the address pattern that is near the most recently detected position of the electronic pen 10. When the electronic pen 10 is loaded with the current

grid, it knows what actions to take based on the positions
that are read from the address pattern. When the
electronic pen 10 is first turned on or when it moves to
an area outside of the current grid, the electronic pen 10
5 must first request a new grid description before it can
continue processing information. In such a situation, the
electronic pen 10 requests a new grid description from the
electronic pen client 22.

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10 The electronic pen client 22 can be located in a
mobile station 14, in a PDA, in a desktop or portable
computer, in the electronic pen 10 itself, in a server
somewhere on the Internet, or in another device. The
electronic pen client 22 serves as the center of
communications in the overall system 2. In particular,
15 the electronic pen client 22 receives new grid requests
and action requests from the electronic pen 10 and
responds to these requests by contacting an appropriate
entity within the overall system 2 to properly respond to
the request from the electronic pen 10. Furthermore, when
20 the electronic pen 10 is being used in connection with a
particular application, the electronic pen client 22 can
store the application and/or any corresponding data

received from the electronic pen 10 to facilitate processing and use of the application.

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The name server 26 is used for translating a detected position on the address pattern into a Uniform Resource Location (URL) associated with that position. Different portions of the address pattern are assigned to different applications. Neither the electronic pen 10 nor the electronic pen client 22, however, is aware of all of the different applications and the particular areas assigned to each application. Thus, when the electronic pen 10 detects a new or unknown position, it forwards the position information to the electronic pen client 22, which in turn sends the information to the name server 26. The name server 26 then identifies an application associated with the received position and retrieves a URL where a description of the particular application can be found. The retrieved URL can then be used by the electronic pen client 22 to retrieve the application description.

As an alternative, the name server 26 can comprise a global name server that keeps track of a location, in the form of URLs to local name servers, where more information can be found about different addresses in the pattern.

Similarly, each local name server can use other local name servers to obtain the necessary information, i.e., to convert a position into a URL where an application description can be found. At the lowest level, the local electronic pen client should know all the paper addresses that are within a specific application or applications.

There are some services that should be available in the overall system 2 for which it is inconvenient or not feasible to support such services in the electronic pen 10 or the electronic pen client 22. In such a case, the base translator 28 can be used to support the services. For example, the base translator 28 might contain handwriting recognition software for converting pen actions into text or for converting pen actions into a predefined set of symbols. When such services are needed, the electronic pen client 22 can send a request to the base translator 28 along with the necessary data, and the base translator 28 can perform the requested service.

Another entity in the system 2 is a control node 24. The control node 24 is used for responding to actions in a standardized way. For example, the control node 24 can be used to respond to certain generic functions, such as "cancel" or "submit" functions, in a consistent manner

without regard to the particular application that is currently active.

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In addition, the control node 24 is used for creating streaming-like applications. For instance, some applications might require that the positions on the address pattern that are detected by the electronic pen 10 be immediately sent, upon detection, to the electronic pen client 22 for use by the application (i.e., the electronic pen 10 does not wait to transmit the position data until a complete stroke is detected or until a "send" field is touched). One example is an application that is used to control an industrial robot in a warehouse. In such a case, the application description that is loaded onto the electronic pen server 22 can include instructions that all positions be streamed to a control node 24. As a result, the control node 24 can receive the positions in real time and can control the robot without waiting for the form (i.e., the current grid) to be completed. Thus, the control node 24 can perform a real-time translation from detected positions to a responsive action, such as moving an object (e.g., a robot, a valve, etc.) or controlling a process.

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The application server 30 is a regular web or wireless application protocol (WAP) server that supports an application associated with a particular area of the address pattern. The application server 30 stores an application description and provides the application description to the electronic pen client 22 upon request. In addition, the application server 30 receives input data from the electronic pen 10 via the electronic pen client 22. For example, the application description might define a number of data entry areas on a form. Thus when data is entered on the form by the electronic pen 10, the data is received by the electronic pen client 22, converted into text using handwriting recognition software, and forwarded to the application server 30, which stores the data or otherwise processes the data in accordance with the function of the application.

Referring now to FIGURES 3 through 6 there are illustrated various examples of protocol stacks that can be used for communicating between the entities shown in FIGURE 2. Generally, however, such protocols apply however, only if the two communicating entities are implemented in different devices. If two or more entities are combined into one device, a proprietary protocol can

be used to communicate between the entities. FIGURE 3 illustrates the protocol stacks that can be used in the case of local communications (e.g., using Bluetooth) between the electronic pen 10 and the electronic pen client 22. If, on the other hand, the electronic pen 10 and the electronic pen client 22 communicate with one another via an Internet connection, the protocol stacks depicted in FIGURE 4 will be used. FIGURE 5 illustrates a protocol stack for communicating between the electronic pen client and each of the supporting entities, such as the name server 26, the control node 24, the base translator 28, and the application server 30, when the electronic pen client 22 is not contained within a server on the Internet (e.g., such as when the electronic pen client 22 is located in a mobile phone 14). Finally, FIGURE 6 depicts the protocol stacks that are used when the electronic pen client 22 is located on the Internet.

There are a number of procedures that can be used by the various entities in the system 2 to allow the system to operate properly. When the electronic pen 10 detects a position on the address pattern that is not within its currently loaded grid or when the electronic pen 10 has no currently loaded grid, the electronic pen 10 initiates a

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new grid procedure. The new grid procedure involves sending a new grid request object to the electronic pen client 22. The new grid request object contains the newly detected position, a description of the actions that the electronic pen 10 can natively support, and a description of the output signals that the electronic pen 10 supports. The reply to a new grid request object is a grid description, which can be provided by the electronic pen client 22 from its own internal memory or from the information provided by an application server 30. Generally, the electronic pen client 22 extracts the grid description from an application description received from the application server 30. The grid description should only contain action-field-types that the electronic pen 10 has indicated that it natively supports, which means that the electronic pen client 22 in some cases should convert the extracted grid description into a format that the electronic pen 10 can understand.

In some situations, it may be necessary for the electronic pen 10 to unload its current grid at the request of the electronic pen client 22. In such a case, the electronic pen client 22 sends an empty grid description to the electronic pen 10, thereby causing the

electronic pen 10 to unload its current grid. This can occur, for example, when a particular application is complete or when a new grid description request received from the electronic pen 10 cannot be fulfilled, such as
5 when the position received from the electronic pen 10 is not registered in the name server 26.

Another similar message is the empty grid description with a grid exception. When the electronic pen 10 requests a new grid description from the electronic pen
10 client 22, the electronic pen client 22 uses the detected position specified in the request to ask the name server 26 for a URL where the application description can be found. If no URL is returned, the electronic pen client 22 can send an empty grid description with a grid
15 exception to the electronic pen 10. The grid exception comprises a rectangle or other shape indicating the area around the detected position where no registered applications can be found. Preferably, the indicated area is as large as possible so that the electronic pen 10
20 and/or electronic pen client 22 know the extent of the surrounding area that is unassigned and do not have to repeatedly send requests to the name server 26. Thus, the empty grid description with a grid exception causes the

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electronic pen 10 to unload its current grid and also informs the electronic pen 10 of an area surrounding the detected position that can essentially be ignored because its is not associated with any application.

5 The procedure that is used when the electronic pen 10 detects a new position is a find application description location procedure. This procedure is used by the electronic pen client 22 to translate a detected position received from the electronic pen 10 into a URL where a
10 description of an application corresponding to that position can be found. The procedure involves sending a request from the electronic pen client 22 to the name server 26 containing identification of the detected position. The name server 26 responds by sending a reply
15 to the electronic pen client 22 containing a URL where an application description can be found or, if the detected position is not registered in the name server 26, containing an indication that no associated application is known to exist.

20 Once the electronic pen client 22 knows the URL where an application description can be found, the electronic pen client 22 can initiate a get application description procedure, which allows the electronic pen client 22 to

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retrieve the application description from the application server 30. In particular, the electronic pen client 22 sends an application description request containing a unique ID for the requesting electronic pen 10 and/or electronic pen client 22 to the application server 30 located at the URL address provided by the name server 26. In response, the application server 30 provides an application description object to the electronic pen client 22, which loads the application onto the electronic pen client 22. The application description object is similar to an HTML form with some additions and modifications.

Furthermore, the application description object can be sent from the application server 30 to the electronic pen client 22 in response to a submitted form (i.e., a submission of one completed form might automatically result in a new form being loaded onto the electronic pen client 22). A related procedure is the application submit procedure, which is used by the electronic pen client 22 when the user of the electronic pen 10 selects a "submit" field in a form. In response to the selection of the "submit" field, the electronic pen client 22 will submit the form content in accordance with instructions received

in the application description. Typically, the electronic pen client 22 will submit the form content, in the same way as a regular web browser, to a URL specified in a form tag of the application description.

5 When an action that can be handled by the electronic pen 10 itself is generated, an action procedure is initiated by the electronic pen 10 to send an action request object to the electronic pen client 22. If the electronic pen client 22 cannot translate the action into
10 a field value itself, the electronic pen client 22 further forwards the request to a base translator 28 for translating the action into a field value. In response to the action request object, an action reply object is sent from the electronic pen client 22 to the electronic pen
15 10. The action reply object contains output information that indicates to the electronic pen 10 which outputs signals to use. The output information, however, cannot be of type that the electronic pen 10 has previously indicated that it does not support. In some instances, the
20 action reply object might contain a new grid description. In such a case the electronic pen 10 will unload its current grid description and load the new grid description. Similarly, if the action reply object

contains an empty grid description, the electronic pen 10 will simply unload its current grid description.

The action request object is also sometimes used to specify actions that should be processed by the control node 24. In this instance, the electronic pen client 22 initiates a control procedure by forwarding the received action to the appropriate control node 24. As a result, the control node 24 sends an action reply object to the electronic pen client 22.

10 The operation of the electronic pen 10 will now be discussed in greater detail. Each electronic pen 10 has a unique pen ID, which is sent to the application server 30 when an application description is requested. The electronic pen ID allows the application to identify the particular user that is using the application and to distinguish between multiple concurrent users of the same application, such as when different electronic pens 10 are being used in connection with separate sheets of paper that each contain the same portion of the address pattern.

20 Referring now to FIGURE 7, there is illustrated a block diagram of the electronic pen logic that handles positions, strokes, actions, and grid descriptions for the electronic pen 10. The electronic pen 10 includes a

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control block 32 for controlling the operation of the
electronic pen 10. A grid description block 34 represents
a memory location that stores a current grid description.
At any given time, the electronic pen 10 can be in either
5 of two modes. In a first mode, a grid description is
loaded, while in a second mode, the grid description block
34 is not loaded with a current grid description.

As the electronic pen 10 moves across an address
pattern, the electronic pen 10 periodically (e.g., every
10 1/100 of a second) detects a position by detecting all of
the dots within, for example, a 3mm by 3mm area. Each
detected position is forwarded (as indicated at 36) to a
position first in first out (FIFO) block 38, which acts as
a buffer for temporarily storing the detected positions.
15 The clocking of the position FIFO block 38 is controlled
by the control block 32 (as indicated at 40).

The detected position is fed from the position FIFO
block 38 (as indicated at 42) to an in grid detector 44.
The in grid detector 44 retrieves data from the grid
20 description block 34 (as indicated at 46) and determines
whether the received position is within the loaded grid
description. If not, the in grid detector 44 notifies the
control block 32, which in turn initiates a request for a

new grid. When the detected position is within the
current grid, the position is then sent (as indicated at
50) from the in grid detector 44 to a stroke engine 52.
The stroke engine 52 converts the received positions into
5 strokes, which are then sent (as indicated at 54) to an
action engine 56. A complete stroke is created when the
electronic pen 10 is lifted from the paper or when it
moves outside of the grid field where the stroke began.
Finally, the action engine 56 converts the received stroke
10 into an action that can be sent to the electronic pen
client 22. By using grid action-field-types, the action
engine knows which type of action to produce for a
specific grid field.

Referring now to FIGURE 8, there is illustrated a
15 block diagram of a state machine for the control block 32
shown in FIGURE 7. In this figure, events are indicated
in capital letters, while tasks associated with the event
are depicted in brackets. The process starts at step 60
with a start up event 62, which causes the position FIFO
20 block 38 to begin receiving detected positions.
Initially, the electronic pen 10 is in a no grid loaded
state 64, which means that the electronic pen 10 does not
have a grid loaded in the grid description block 34. As a

result, the control block 32 generates an outside grid indication 66, thereby causing the electronic pen 10 to send the request for a new grid description to the electronic pen client 22 (i.e., in accordance with the new grid procedure) and to stop the FIFO buffer 38. At this point, the electronic pen 10 enters a waiting for grid state 68.

Once the new grid has been received (as indicated at 70), the control block 32 moves to a grid loaded state 72, at which time the new grid is loaded into the grid description block 34 and the position FIFO block 38 resumes operation. On the other hand, if no grid is received (as indicated at 74), at least a portion of the positions stored in the FIFO buffer 38 are erased. Which part of the FIFO buffer to erase is determined by the grid exception area, if any, in the received empty grid description. Accordingly, all positions stored in the FIFO buffer 38 that are within the grid exception area should be erased. If no grid exception is received, the stroke associated with the position is erased. In addition, the FIFO block 38 resumes operation and the control block 32 moves into the no grid loaded state 64.

When the control block 32 is in the grid loaded state 72, a current grid is loaded in the grid description block 34. While the control block 32 remains in this state 72, the position FIFO block 38 continues to receive detected
5 positions and passes them on to the stroke engine 52 and action engine 56. Actions produced by the action engine 56 are sent (as indicated at 58) to the electronic pen client 22 (i.e., in accordance with the action procedure described above).

10 At some point, an outside grid indication 74 may be received by the control block 32 from the in grid detector 44. The outside grid event 74 causes the FIFO block 38 to stop generating new positions. In addition, the
15 electronic pen 10 enters a flushing stroke and action state 76 wherein the strokes that are currently in the stroke engine 52 and the actions that are currently in the action engine 56 are flushed to the electronic pen client
20 22. Once the stroke engine 52 and action engine 56 have been fully flushed (as indicated at 78), the electronic pen 10 sends a request for a new grid to the electronic pen client 22 and unloads the current grid. The control block 32 then moves back into the waiting for grid state 68.

As a general matter, the electronic pen 10 may be capable of supporting various different types of output, including audio, such as warning tones; visual, such as a flashing light; tactile, such as vibration; and/or ink.

5 In some cases, it might be desirable to allow the user of the electronic pen 10 to turn off the ink of the pen 10, such as when the electronic pen is being used on a portion of the address pattern that is public or shared or when the user wants to be able to reuse the current sheet of
10 paper.

The electronic pen client 22 will now be described in greater detail. Generally, the electronic pen client 22 is analogous to a regular web browser. It is responsible for loading applications from application servers 30 and
15 for handling input from the electronic pen 10. Preferably, the electronic pen client 22 is located in a separate device from the electronic pen 10 itself. This is because it is desirable to minimize the size and power supply requirements of the electronic pen 10, which will
20 likely be adversely affected by the processing resources and memory necessary to support the functions of the electronic pen client 22.

Referring now to FIGURE 9, there is illustrated a block diagram of a state machine for the electronic pen client 22. Initially, the electronic pen client 22 is in a no application loaded state 80. The electronic pen client 22 recognizes only one signal when in this state 80, namely a new grid request from the electronic pen 10. Such a request causes a load grid indication event 82. The electronic pen client 22 responds by sending a request to the name server 26 to translate a position contained within the new grid request into a URL where the application description can be found (i.e., in accordance with the find application location procedure). Next, the electronic pen client 22 enters a waiting for application description URL state 84. If no URL for the application description can be found (as indicated at 86), the electronic pen client 22 sends a new grid reply to the electronic pen 10, wherein the reply contains an empty grid description with a grid exception. As a result, the electronic pen client 22 returns to the no application loaded state 80.

If a URL for the application description is received from the name server 26 (as indicated at 88), the electronic pen client 22 sends a request to the

application server 30 to retrieve the application
description (i.e., in accordance with the get application
description procedure). Accordingly, the electronic pen
client 22 enters a waiting for application description
5 state 90.

If the electronic pen client 22 does not receive an
application description from the application server 30 (as
indicated at 92), a new grid reply is sent by the
electronic pen client 22 to the electronic pen 10 wherein
10 the reply contains an empty grid. Thus, the electronic
pen client 22 returns to the no application loaded state
80. If, however, the electronic pen client 22 does
receive an application description from the application
server 30 (as indicated at 94), the electronic pen client
15 22 sends a new grid reply to the electronic pen 10
containing a new grid description, and the electronic pen
client 22 loads the application in its memory. In
addition, the electronic pen client 22 moves into an
application loaded state 96.

20 In the application loaded state 96, five types of
actions can be received by the electronic pen client 22
from the electronic pen 10. First, a received action can
include a request that the electronic pen client 22 cannot

handle itself, in which case the electronic pen client 22 will send the action to the base translator 28 (as indicated at 98). The electronic pen client 22 then moves into a waiting for response from the base translator state 100. Once a base translator response 102 is received by the electronic pen client 22, the electronic pen client 22 updates a current form or other data associated with the currently loaded application and sends an action reply to the electronic pen 10 with appropriate output information.

Another type of action that the electronic pen client 22 can receive from the electronic pen 10 is a request that should be forwarded to a control node 24. In such a case, the action is sent to a control URL specified in the application description (as indicated at 104), and the electronic pen client 22 enters a waiting for response from the control state 106. Once a response is received from the control (as indicated at 108), the electronic pen client 22 sends an action reply to the electronic pen 10 with appropriate output information.

A third type of action is a submit form request, in response to which the electronic pen client 22 will submit the current form to the application server 30 that is identified by the URL in the application description (as

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indicated at 110). The electronic pen client 22 then enters a waiting for response from the application server state 112. If the application server 30 responds by sending an empty application description to the electronic pen client 22 (as indicated at 114), the current application is unloaded from the electronic pen client 22 and an action reply is sent to the electronic pen 10 with an empty grid. As a result, the electronic pen client 22 returns to the no application loaded state 80. On the other hand, if the application server 30 responds with a non-empty application description, the old application is unloaded from the electronic pen client 22, the new application description is parsed and loaded in the electronic pen client 22, an action reply is sent to the electronic pen 10 with a new grid description and with appropriate output information, and finally the electronic pen client 22 returns to the application loaded state 96.

A fourth type of action that can be received by the electronic pen client 22 from the electronic pen 10 is a request to load a new grid. This action occurs, for example, when a position outside of the current grid is detected by the electronic pen 10. When a new grid request is received, the electronic pen client 22 sends a

request to the name server 26 (as indicated at 116) and the electronic pen client 22 returns to the waiting for application description URL state 84.

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Finally, a fifth type of action that can be received by the electronic pen client 22 is an action that the electronic pen client 22 can handle itself, in which case the electronic pen client 22 updates the current form and sends an action reply to the electronic pen 10 with appropriate output information (as indicated at 118). The electronic pen client 22 then remains in the application loaded state 96. One type of action that the electronic pen client 22 might be able to handle itself is a local application. For example, the electronic pen client 22 might be capable of performing certain basic functions that are defined by a local application. Thus, when the electronic pen client 22 receives a new grid request, the position associated with the new grid request can be analyzed to determine if it corresponds to a local application. If so, the electronic pen client 22 can load the application description from its local memory, send a new grid description to the electronic pen 10 without having to communicate with the name server 26 or the application server 30.

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Another action that might be handled locally by the electronic pen client 22 relates to the selection of fields within a form. When the electronic pen client 22 receives an action, the field that corresponds to that action receives focus. When this occurs, the electronic pen client 22 might display the field's value on its display or output the value by audio. In addition, the electronic pen client 22 might allow the user to edit the value of the field by means other than the electronic pen 10. Yet another type of action that might be handled by the electronic pen client 22 itself are actions that relate to a clipboard function. When a "copy" field is selected, the value of the field that had focus at the time the copy field was selected is transferred to the clipboard. Similarly, when a "paste" field is selected, the value stored in the clipboard is transferred to the field that had focus at the time the paste field was selected.

Referring now to FIGURES 10A through 10C, there is shown, by way of example, a message flow and signaling diagram illustrating the operation of the electronic pen system 2 depicted in and discussed in connection with FIGURE 2. Initially, the electronic pen 10 detects a

first position on the address pattern at step 120 (e.g.,
at a location on a sheet of paper designated for composing
and sending e-mails). At this stage, it is assumed that
the electronic pen 10 is in a no grid loaded state. Thus,
5 in response to the detection of the first position, the
electronic pen 10 sends a new grid request 122, which
contains the detected position information, to the
electronic pen client 22. As a result, the electronic pen
client 22 sends an application location request 124
10 containing the detected position information to the name
server 26, at step 126. The name server 26 translates the
detected position into a URL where an application
description that corresponds to the detected position can
be found (e.g., a URL address for a server containing an
15 e-mail application), and returns an application location
reply 128 containing the retrieved URL to the electronic
pen client 22.

The electronic pen client 22 then sends an
application description request 130, which contains the
20 unique pen ID for the electronic pen 10, to the
application server 30. The application server 30
retrieves the application description at step 132 and
sends an application description reply 134 containing the

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retrieved application description to the electronic pen client 22. The electronic pen client 22 then parses and stores the application description at step 136. This step further involves generating a current grid description from the application description and sending the grid description to the electronic pen 10 in a new grid reply 138. The electronic pen 10 stores the received grid description at step 140 and resumes processing of the detected positions. Using the detected positions and the information in the grid description (e.g., so that the electronic pen 10 knows which fields of the e-mail form are being filled in), the electronic pen 10 generates strokes at step 142 and generates actions at step 144 using the stroke engine 52 and action engine 56 shown in FIGURE 7.

Each time an action is generated that cannot be handled by the electronic pen 10 itself, an action request 146 containing a description of the action is sent from the electronic pen 10 to the electronic pen client 22. At this point, the electronic pen client 22 should determine what type of action has been received so that it can respond to the action in an appropriate manner. First, it is determined whether the action requires the attention

of, or otherwise should be processed in accordance with, a
local application at step 148. Very basic applications or
frequently used applications (e.g., delete entered text),
for example, might be stored locally to avoid having to
5 contact another entity. In such a case, the electronic
pen client 22 retrieves the local application at step 150
and sends an action reply 152, which can contain a new
grid description or other appropriate information.

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10 However, if it is determined at step 148 that the
received action does not relate to a local application,
the process continues at step 154 where it is determined
whether the received action requires processing by an
external translator (e.g., handwriting recognition). If
so, an action request 156 containing a description of the
15 action is sent by the electronic pen client 22 to the base
translator 28. The base translator 28 processes the
action at step 158 and sends an action reply 160
containing output information responsive to the received
action (e.g., text corresponding to written characters) to
20 the electronic pen client 22, which can forward the output
information to the electronic pen 10 in an action reply
162, if necessary.

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If it is determined at step 154 that the received action does not require processing by an external translator, it is next determined whether the action relates to a control application at step 164. If so, an action request 166 containing a description of the action is sent by the electronic pen client 22 to the control server 24. The control server 24 processes the received action at step 168, if a response is necessary, and returns output information responsive to the received action in an action reply 170, which is forwarded from the electronic pen client 22 to the electronic pen 10 in an action reply 172.

Assuming that it is determined at step 164 that the received action does not relate to a control function, it is next determined whether the action comprises a request to submit a form at step 174 (e.g., a selection of a "send" area on the e-mail form). If so, an action request 176 containing the data entered onto the form is sent by the electronic pen client 22 to the application server 30. The application server 30 processes the form at step 178 and sends an action reply 180 containing a new application description (or an empty application description) to the electronic pen client 22. The electronic pen client 22

10 At some point, it is assumed that the electronic pen
10 detects a position that is outside of the currently
loaded grid at step 186. In response to such an event,
the electronic pen 10 sends a new grid request 188
containing the newly detected position data to the
15 electronic pen client 22. In response, the electronic pen
client 22 again generates an application location request
190 containing the detected position data and sends the
request to the name server 26. The name server 26
determines whether a URL for an application description
20 that corresponds to the newly detected position is
available at step 192.

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5 electronic pen client 22, which in turn sends an
application description request 196 containing the unique
pen ID for the electronic pen 10 to the application server
30 at the identified URL address, just as previously
discussed in connection with messages 128 and 130. In
this case, however, it is assumed that the application
server 30 determines that the requested application
description is unavailable at step 198. As a result, the
application server 30 sends an application description
10 reply to the electronic pen client 22 containing an empty
application description. In response to the receipt of an
empty application description, the electronic pen client
22 unloads the current application at step 202 and sends a
new grid reply 204 containing an empty grid description to
15 the electronic pen 10. The electronic pen 10 responds to
the receipt of the empty grid description by unloading the
current grid description at step 206.

Another possibility is that the name server 26
determines at step 192 that a URL corresponding to the
20 detected position is not available. In this situation,
the name server 26 sends an application location reply 208
to the electronic pen client 22. The reply 208 may simply
be empty to indicate that a URL is not available.

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Preferably, however, the reply 208 contains a grid exception defining the largest area possible around the detected position for which there is no corresponding URL. In response to the reply 208, the electronic pen client 22
5 sends a new grid reply 210 containing an empty grid description with a grid exception. Upon receiving the reply 210, the electronic pen 10 unloads the current grid description at step 212. Furthermore, assuming that the electronic pen 10 receives and recognizes the grid
10 exception information, the electronic pen 10 may subsequently be able to determine that certain detected positions on the address pattern are not associated with any application without having to send a request to the name server 26 or the application server 30.

15 In addition to being able to use the electronic pen 10 as a user input device, it might also be desirable for some applications to provide a reading device that is capable of generating output. In accordance with the present invention, therefore, there is provided an
20 electronic pen having a positioning mechanism for detecting positions of the pen relative to an address pattern and a print head, such as a line of thermo-printing dots. Referring now to FIGURE 11, there is

illustrated an example of an electronic printer reading
device 8 in accordance with the present invention. The
electronic printer reading device 8 includes a position
sensor 214 and lens 216 for detecting a position of the
5 printer reading device 8 with respect to an address
pattern on a paper or other specially formatted surface.
The electronic printer reading device 8 also includes the
thermo-print head 218 that includes a line or matrix of
thermo-printing dots for thermally activating selected
10 positions on a thermal print paper 220. Alternatively,
the electronic printer reading device 8 could use a laser
writer or ink jet printing mechanism that can accurately
print at selected positions on an addressed paper.

Selected information, such as text or graphics, can
15 be loaded onto the electronic printer reading device 8
using, for example, a web browser contained within the
electronic pen client 22. The information is associated
with a particular area on the overall address pattern.
For example, the textual or graphical information loaded
20 onto the electronic printer reading device 8 can be
associated with a specific, predetermined portion of the
address pattern. Alternatively, the textual or graphical
information can be associated, just prior to printing,

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with a particular portion of the address pattern that is stored in the printer reading device 8, in the electronic pen client 22, or in a remote server. Accordingly, when the electronic printer reading device 8 is moved across the thermal paper 220 (as indicated by 222), the information is printed in exactly the right position on the thermal sensitive paper 220 by the thermo-print head 218 when the position sensor 214 detects that the electronic printer reading device 8 is moving across the area associated with the information. In particular, each of the thermo-printing dots activates over precise locations on the thermal sensitive paper 220 such that text, an image, or other printed information is reproduced on the thermal sensitive paper 220.

Preferably, the electronic printer reading device 8 is capable of printing information in exactly the right position without regard to how the electronic printer reading device 8 is moved across the thermal sensitive paper. Accordingly, the thermo-printing dots will activate a particular location on the thermal sensitive paper 220 in the same manner, regardless of whether the electronic printer reading device 8 is moved in a left to right direction, an up and down direction, or any other

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direction. In addition, the electronic printer reading device 8 will activate a particular position on the thermal sensitive paper 220 in the same manner even when the electronic printer reading device 8 is moved across the same position multiple times. To support this capability, it is necessary that the electronic printer reading device 8 utilizes a very accurate position sensor 214. Moreover, the electronic printer reading device 8 will need very exact angle sensitive positioning detection (i.e., by detecting the address pattern, the angle or orientation of the electronic printer reading device can be determined).

In addition to the thermo-print head, the electronic printer reading device 8 can also include an ink cartridge or other mechanism for writing as described above in connection with the electronic pen 10. The electronic printer reading device 8 can then be used both for output and input. For instance, the electronic printer reading device 8 can be used to print the information on a sheet of paper by selecting a printing function of the electronic printer reading device 8. Subsequently, by selecting the writing function, a user could modify the printed image or document (e.g., to add a signature) and

the modified image or document could be stored as a new document. Moreover, the electronic printer reading device 8 can be used to print stored textual or graphical information that was previously formed by a writing
5 function of the electronic printer reading device 8 or of a separate electronic pen 10.

In another embodiment of the invention, a user of the electronic printer reading device 8 can select to enlarge or reduce the size of the images or text printed by the
10 electronic printer reading device 8. Another optional aspect of the electronic printer reading device 8 involves limiting the print function such that it works only on specific areas in the overall address pattern. In other words, the position sensor 214 detects the address pattern
15 and only activates the thermo-print head 218 if the detected pattern corresponds to an area in which printing is allowed.

In yet another aspect of the invention, the electronic reading device 8 can include a speaker or other
20 mechanism for generating or playing any type of audio sound (e.g., speech, music, tones, and the like) based on the position of the electronic reading device 8 relative to the address pattern. Such a generation of audio sound

can be provided either while the electronic printer reading device 8 is printing or when it is not printing. In fact, the thermo-print head 218 is not required for the sound function to work.

5 Referring now to FIGURE 12, there is depicted a more detailed illustration of an electronic printer reading device 8 that is capable of both printing output information using a thermo-print head 218 and creating handwritten information using an ink cartridge 224.

10 Generally, the writing function of the electronic reading device 8 is used for purposes of inputting information and of creating a paper copy record of the information that is input into the electronic pen system 2 by the electronic reading device 8. This is accomplished using the position

15 sensor 214 and lens 216, which repeatedly detect positions of the electronic reading device 8 on the address pattern and forward each position to a position buffer 226. The position buffer 226 temporarily stores positions for processing by a microprocessor control 228 and/or for

20 transmission to an electronic pen client 22 via a Bluetooth transceiver 232.

With respect to the print function of the electronic reading device 8, information to be printed can be

received by the Bluetooth transceiver 232 and stored in a
memory 230. Subsequently, based on positions detected by
the position sensor 214, the microprocessor control 228
can selectively activate elements of the thermo-print head
5 218 so as to recreate the image or text stored in the
memory 230 on the thermal sensitive paper 220.

Although various preferred embodiments of the method
and apparatus of the present invention have been
illustrated in the accompanying Drawings and described in
10 the foregoing Detailed Description, it is understood that
the invention is not limited to the embodiments disclosed,
but is capable of numerous rearrangements, modifications,
and substitutions without departing from the spirit of the
invention as set forth and defined by the following
15 claims. Furthermore, it shall be understood that the
terms "comprises" and "comprising," when used in the
foregoing Detailed Description and the following claims,
specifies the presence of stated features, elements,
steps, or components but does not preclude the presence or
20 addition of one or more other features, elements, steps,
components, or groups thereof.